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If you're concerned about how changes in the electricity and gas markets may be affecting you, or you feel you're paying more for your energy bills than you should be, there are a number of options that could greatly reduce the amount you pay.

Improving the energy efficiency of your home is one vital area in which savings can often be made, especially if you live in an older property or use older appliances. Replacing a gas boiler that's over 10 years old with a new one can have dramatic effects on your gas bills, with many new boilers being rated A for their energy efficiency, compared to ratings as low as G for older models. Many of your household electronics could also be consuming more power than modern equivalents, from washing machines to computers and entertainment systems.

You might not even need to invest in new appliances to improve the energy efficiency of your home though, when you take steps to improve how you and other people in your household use electricity and gas, to reduce the amount being wasted. Making sure everyone in your home knows to switch off lights when they leave the room, and not to leave equipment on standby, could have a major effect on your electricity bills.

If you're worried about the amount of electricity or gas you consume in your home, switching your standard supply for a prepaid meter could be useful for helping you manage your consumption more effectively. These meters need to be charged with credit and will display the remaining balance at all times, so you'll always know how much you're using and won't be surprised by an expensive bill at the end of the month or quarter. However the tariffs via these meters may be more expensive, so check the rates carefully. Another option is to invest in an energy monitoring device.

If you've done everything in your power to improve the energy efficiency of your home but feel you're still being billed unfairly, comparing different tariffs from the major suppliers could help you find the cheapest gas and electricity available, including cost-effective dual fuel tariffs.

Price comparison websites can be a useful starting point, allowing you to directly compare tariffs from the biggest companies side by side, but it's also recommended to visit the official websites of suppliers to find out whether they offer more specialised tariffs. Entering your postcode or address details could allow you to receive an estimate for your monthly, quarterly or annual electricity and gas bills before you make your decision.

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